

Sharing of Information and Cooperation among University Libraries and their Importance in the Networked World

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Abstract: Libraries and information units face daily challenges of making their book collections more visible for use. In addition to visibility, materials should also be easily available, if possible, online. To achieve this goal, catalogues are essential tools for finding the desired information. It is equally important that libraries cooperate with each other and share their catalogues among them. In this context, participation of libraries in information networks is a positive alternative. Libraries should not be bound to their local book collection, but they also need to expand it through networks, so that they are able to borrow books or exchange documents with other libraries. University libraries need to create storage of local documents with open access to theses, dissertations, scientific research papers and their institutional memory. Although Brazilian university libraries have made significant progress in the provision of services using new information and communication technologies as well as by taking part in cooperative networks, it is necessary to see that libraries have reached various stages of development and we still have a long way to go.

Abstract: Bibliotheken setzen sich täglich mit der Frage auseinander, wie sie für ihre Sammlungen eine höhere Sichtbarkeit erreichen können. Zusätzlich sollten ihre Bestände am besten online verfügbar sein. Kataloge sind zur Erreichung dieses Zieles unerlässlich. Dazu müssen Bibliotheken vermehrt kooperieren. In diesem Zusammenhang ist die Bildung von Verbünden eine positive Alternative. Bibliotheken sollten nicht nur auf ihre lokalen Bestände fokussieren, sondern Verbünde bilden um Ausleihen aus anderen Bibliotheken zu ermöglichen. Universitätsbibliotheken sollten Dissertationen, Abschlussarbeiten, Forschungsergebnisse und Dokumente der Institution Open Access zur Verfügung stellen. Obwohl die brasilianischen Universitätsbibliotheken bereits grosse Fortschritte in der Anwendung neuer Informationstechnologien und in der Errichtung von Verbünden erzielt haben, befinden sich noch nicht alle Bibliotheken auf dem gleichen Entwicklungsstand.

1. Introduction

Libraries and information units face daily challenges of making their book collections more visible for use. In addition to visibility, materials

should also be easily available, if possible, online. Nowadays there is no need for stepping out of the house for having access to information.

Libraries, regardless of where they are physically located, permanently need to analyze their

services and products that they offer in order to reach a wide audience. To achieve this goal, catalogues are essential tools for finding the desired information. It is equally important that libraries cooperate with each other and share their catalogues among them. Many pieces of information are available nowadays, of which not only the location, but the way on how to get access to them can also be found. In an age of constant changes and breaking of paradigms, both of which society has been experiencing in recent years, information technology stands out as a central factor in the cycle of changes. One of the factors that completely alters the context of libraries in the eyes of contemporary society is the frenetic development of technologies, particularly that of information networks (Assunção/Reis 2012). In this context, the participation of libraries in information networks is a positive alternative.

2. Library Catalogues

Library science has been affected by many changes, of which the most important period was between 1970 and 1985, an era marked by the fourth generation of computers, a time when microcomputers and network structures were implemented. The use of this technology in libraries, together with communication technologies, was responsible for the major development of information systems worldwide already in the 1990s, triggering the advances we enjoy today by consulting the library catalogues online (Cruz/Mendes/Weitzel 2004:51). After the computerization of libraries, catalogues offered also other benefits to users and librarians, in addition to the information on the location of an item. Card catalogues were replaced with online catalogues, which became a tool for information exchange for technical activities like cataloguing through importing MARC records.

The Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) is an automated catalogue in which the user is entitled to get direct access without any intermediary, using user-friendly interfaces. Most library catalogues available on the internet are based on this system (Cunha/Cavalcanti 2008). The expansion of online catalogues made the changes of services and products offered to users possible, allowing changes in the relationship of users and libraries (Gusmão/Santos/Silva/Deus 2009). The OPACs include more detailed possibilities, making browsing in the catalogue more dynamic and attractive for the user. It is possible to search by using filters such as keywords, titles, authors, and other fields within the bibliographic record, and it also offers Boolean search, as well as search by chronological order. Navigating facilities and improved online help are available

online as well. The system also includes records, book covers and other materials considering that covers contain various pieces of information, PDF documents or links to access online, summaries and reviews of works, and interactions with Twitter and Facebook. These search possibilities in catalogues are already offered by Brazilian software.

3. Library networks in Brazil

Data transfer protocols such as Z39-50 and OAI-PMH are fundamental to the integration of catalogues, just like international standards of cataloguing such as MARC 21 and Dublin Core, as well as the quality of bibliographic records. The use of these tools made the establishment of collective catalogues possible. Collective catalogues are kept in information units which store bibliographic records of collections belonging to various documentary entities, which can be public or private, local, state, regional, federal or international. These are tools for identifying and locating documents (items) (Cunha/Cavalcanti 2008).

Some initiatives of collective or cooperative catalogues are already consolidated in Brazil, such as the Catálogo Coletivo Nacional de Publicações Periódicas Seriadas (CCN), which operates under the coordination of the Brazilian Institute of Information, Science and Technology (Instituto Brasileiro de Informação, Ciência e Tecnologia – IBICT¹). The CCN is a public-access catalogue which gathers information about the collections of national and foreign serial publications available in Brazilian libraries. The libraries, which are members of the CCN network, have automated collections and act cooperatively. The goals of the collective catalogue are to distribute, identify and locate serial publications in the country, to establish collection acquisition policies, to standardize the entry of titles on international criteria, and to promote information exchanges between libraries through bibliographic commutation services. The CRUESP²-libraries³ (CRUESP-Bibliotecas) integrate library systems of UNICAMP⁴, USP⁵ and UNESP⁶. The

¹ See <http://www.ibict.br/informacao-para-ciencia-tecnologia-e-inovacao%20/catalogo-coletivo-nacional-de-publicacoes-seriadas%28ccn%29> [as of: 23.09.2013].

² See <http://www.ceb.unicamp.br/por/Biblioteca/Links-Interessantes/Catalogos-On-Line-de-Sistemas-de-Bibliotecas> [as of: 13.09.2013].

³ Conselho de Reitores das Universidades Estaduais Paulistas.

⁴ Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

⁵ Universidade de São Paulo.

⁶ Universidade Estadual Paulista “Júlio de Mesquita Filho”.

user can locate a material pertaining to any of these universities by doing a simultaneous search. The consortium brings together 89 libraries of the three universities. The CVA-RICESU⁷ is a network of twelve Catholic institutions of different religious orders located in various parts of Brazil. It offers the collection of dissertations, theses and articles published by member institutions. The Virtual Network of Libraries – National Congress (Rede Virtual de Bibliotecas – Congresso Nacional – RVBI⁸) is a cooperative network of libraries coordinated by the Library of the Federal Senate (Biblioteca do Senado Federal) which gathers bibliographies, materials and human resources from fourteen libraries of the Federal Public Administration (Administração Pública Federal), the Government of the Federal District (Governo do Distrito Federal), and the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers (Poderes Legislativo, Executivo e Judiciário) in order to meet maintenance staff requirements of bibliographic information.

In this context, there is a network called “Rede Pergamum”⁹ which consists of institutions using the Pergamum software – Integrated Library System (software Pergamum – Sistema Integrado de Bibliotecas) with the purpose of improving the overall quality of services to users promoting cooperation in information processing, as well as sharing sources of information. The network currently comprises 424 institutions and 5,854 information units of which 259 are libraries of universities and colleges. The number of network users is 7,268,216, totaling a collection of 18,331,964 items. Users act as members of a team maintaining the exchange of knowledge among institutions as well as in the field of their professions in order to update and continuously improve the software. The catalogue of Pergamum has the advantage of being constantly updated by having a network where users of libraries find errors and look for solutions together in order to improve these. Another benefit of the system is the possibility to work with the specifics of each institution that they have acquired (Oliveira 2008).

4. Considerations

Cooperation and sharing of information are vital in the Computer Age. University libraries are dynamic units which need special attention and have to be integrated into society. By this, sour-

ces of social networks and mobile communication devices can and should be used to provide services and maintain close relationships with users. In addition to providing information, libraries also need to put the desired documents in the user’s hands as fast as possible. Libraries should not be bound to their local book collection, but they also need to expand it through networks, so that they are able to borrow books or exchange documents with other libraries. University libraries need to create storage of local documents with open access to theses, dissertations, scientific research papers and their institutional memory. Although Brazilian university libraries have made significant progress in the provision of services using new information and communication technologies as well as by taking part in cooperative networks, it is necessary to see that libraries have reached various stages of development and we still have a long way to go.

⁷ See <http://aroeira.org.br/projetos/cva-ricesu/> [as of: 23.09.2013].

⁸ See <http://www.senado.gov.br/senado/biblioteca/rvbi/rvbi.asp> [as of: 23.09.2013].

⁹ See <http://www.pergamum.pucpr.br/redepergamum/> [as of: 23.09.2013].

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